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Ninth meeting of the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development

3-5 April 1988
Niamey, Niger

LC/NAIROBI

REPORT OF THE NINTH MEETING OF THE AFRICA REGIONAL CO-ORDINATING COMMITTEE FOR THE INTEGRATION OF WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

A. PARTICIPATION AND ORGANIZATION OF WORK

1. The ninth meeting of the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee (ARCC) for the integration of women in development was held in Niamey, Niger from 3 to 5 April 1988.

2. Eleven out of the 15 member States of the Committee were represented at the meeting: Burundi, Chad, Comoros, Egypt, Ghana, Mauritania, Morocco, Rwanda, Tunisia, Zaire and Zimbabwe. Six member States of the ECA namely: Algeria, Burkina Faso, the Gambia, Lesotho, Niger and the United Republic of Tanzania attended the meeting as observers. The meeting was also attended by the following organizations in the United Nations system and/or specialized agencies: United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and United Nations Development Fund for Women (UNIFEM). Intergovernmental and non-governmental organizations were also represented as follows: Organization of African Unity (OAU), InterAfrican Committee on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children (IAC), Lutheran World Federation (LWF) and Pan-African Women's Organzation (PAWO).

Opening ceremony (agenda item 1)

3. The opening ceremony was attended by the Minister of Planning and the Secretary of State for Public Health in charge of Social and Women Affairs of the Republic of Niger. Some Government Officials of the Republic of Niger and Diplomatic Corps accredited to Niamey also attended the opening ceremony. The opening ceremony was presided over by the President of ARCC who also served as the Chairperson of the ARCC meeting.

4. In her statement, the President of ARCC paid tribute to the President of the Republic of Niger, its government and its people for the warm welcome and the friendly environment.

5. Continuing, she reported on developments since the last meeting and informed the Committee that resolution 597(XX) adopted by the Conference of Ministers had been implemented by ECA and UNDP and tremendous work had been done by the ARCC/UNDP/ECA evaluation mission on the programmes for the integration of women in development through the ECA/MULPOCs. She then thanked the Executive Secretary of ECA for his efforts in safeguarding the interests of women staff members even at a time when the United Nations was experiencing severe difficulties.

6. She stressed the importance of continuing to support the interest of women even as the African Governments were undergoing difficult times, and that responsibility had to be shouldered more by Government representatives rather than by ECA. Then she pointed out that there was a shift towards recognition of African women as significant human resources for development, thus the issue of women was no longer an equity one. The role of the ECA women's programme therefore had to be encouraged and enhanced.

7. Finally, she recalled the main functions of ARCC for the benefit of the members attending the ARCC meeting for the first time. Those functions were:

(a) to review and evaluate the activities carried out in the region in the framework of the programme for the advancement of women;

(b) to harmonize and co-ordinate the subregional programmes on women in development approved in each of the MULPOCs;

(c) to report to the legislative organs of ECA on the activities and programmes on women in development concerned at subregional and regional levels; and

(d) to mobilize resources for the implementation of programmes agreed at regional and subregional levels.

8. The Executive Secretary of ECA, Professor Adebayo Adedeji, in a statement read on his behalf by the Chief, Policy and Programme Co-ordination Office, welcomed the Committee members to the ninth meeting of the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development, especially at a time when ECA was celebrating the thirtieth anniversary of its establishment. He thanked the Government and people of Niger for the warm hospitality and for the efficient arrangements made for the meeting.

9. He acknowledged the role and efforts ARCC had played and still playing in monitoring the socio-economic changes taking place in the region. National machineries had been instrumental in many African countries in sensitizing governments, non-governmental bodies, institutions, groups and individuals to the role of women in development, and there were some changes taking place: national policies on women's roles were being adopted and increasing attention given to the informal sector. Despite these successes, more needed to be done, and only last month, it had been noted at the International Conference on Human Dimension of Africa's Recovery and Development, held in Khartoum, Sudan 5-8 March 1988 that some recovery programmes had excluded human concerns. Structural adjustment programmes had affected women's programmes and machineries and the incidence of suffering was highest for rural populations, 65 per cent of whom were estimated to be women. Difficulties experienced as a result of these measures included reduced assets, such as land after reallocation to cash crops and limited access to other means of production as well as to social services.

10. Noting the critical role of women, he stressed the need to continue to cater for the special needs of agricultural producers, and explained that incentives for increased productivity had to include appropriate infrastructures, human resources development, essential inputs and adequate marketing opportunities in addition to the increase in producer prices. He then enumerated measures required for longer-term development of rural populations with particular reference to the concerns of women.

11. He informed the Committee of the commitment of the UN Secretary-General to the advancement of women in the secretariat, and of the steps he had taken to increase the number of women professionals in the secretariat, and the problem of ensuring permanency to the African Training and Research Centre for Women had been resolved. Further, as the evaluation report indicated, the subregional women's programme in the MULPOCs had been successful and needed to be continued. A major project that could meet subregional concerns of women had been prepared, and the support of member States was requested.

12. Finally, he drew the attention of the Committee to the report of the regional seminar on the integration of African women in trade and commerce which had just ended and added that a dynamic and organized system of domestic trade was a key element in boosting production, creating employment and a better distribution of income. He then wished the Committee fruitful deliberations.

13. Responding to the ECA Executive Secretary's speech, the President of ARCC stated that the speech should be used as key note address by the ARCC meeting and especially the comments on structural adjustment and its effects on women and the promotion of the outcome of the Regional Workshop on Integration of African Women in Trade and Commerce.

14. The meeting was then officially opened by Madame Aissata Moumouni, Secretary of State for Public Health in charge of Social and Women Affairs, who cordially welcomed all participants on behalf of the Supreme Military Council and the Government of the Niger. She stated that the Niger was gratified to have been accorded the honour of hosting the Ninth Meeting of the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee (ARCC). That testified once again to the bonds of co-operation that existed between the Niger and ECA on the one hand, and between the Association des femmes du Niger (AFN) and ARCC on the other hand. She went on to enumerate the various subregional and regional meetings, the seminars, workshops, study tours, training and education programmes in which the Niger had participated. In her view, these went to show how closely the national machinery of Niger and the subregional and regional structures for the integration of women in development were working together.

15. The awareness of decision makers on the integration of women in the development process had been strengthened and realized by the establishment of a development society which called for all nationals of the country to put their shoulders to the task of nation-building as had been outlined in the national charter adopted by the country.

16. The lessons drawn from the last decade proved, if further proof were needed, that African women were capable of planning for their future. With support from the United Nations, they had formulated the Arusha Strategies and contributed extensively to the formulation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies. After the United Nations Decade for Women, the time had come to ask what had happened to the issue of women's integration in the world at large and in Africa most particularly. The evidence indicated that much remained to be done before African women could affirm their right to full citizenship and work with their male partners on an equal footing that would give substance to the Charter of the United Nations.

17. She went on to recommend that the agencies of the United Nations System should see to it that Africa's priorities expressed in the Arusha Strategies were respected. They were to harmonize their activities in order to make the various development projects and programmes more efficient and effective.

18. In conclusion, she thanked ECA, ARCC and the funding agencies which had worked relentlessly to ensure that women were completely integrated into the development process. Niger was committed to the ideals of ECA and ARCC.

B. AGENDA

Adoption of the agenda (agenda item 2)

19. The meeting adopted the following agenda:

1. Opening of the meeting
2. Adoption of the agenda

3. Activities of ARCC and the Subregional Committees;

   (a) report of the President of the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee (ARCC) on the work of the Committee during the period 1987-1988;

   (b) report of Subregional Committees on the Integration of Women in Development on their work during the period 1987-1988.

4. Report of the African Training and Research Centre for Women: programme of work and activities of ATRCW 1987-1988.

5. Programmes for the integration of women in development through the MULPCCs report of the UNDP/ARCC/ECA Evaluation Mission (August 1987).

6. Implementation of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Programme of Action for African economic recovery and development (1986-1990):

   (a) Report to the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development on the changing socio-economic conditions of women in Africa, in the context of the Nairobi Strategies for the Advancement of Women;

   (b) Report of the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee on the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) on the role of women in their contribution to domestic and intra-African trade.

7. Measures for collaboration between ECA/WID programme and the NGO regional secretariat being established in Africa.

8. Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of women in development (11-23 September 1989) - proposed agenda.

9. Any other businesses.

10. Adoption of the report.

20. Following the adoption of the above agenda, the meeting proceeded with its deliberations with Ghana as Chairperson, Tunisia first Vice-chairperson, Zimbabwe second Vice-chairperson and Rwanda as Rapporteur.

C. ACCOUNT OF PROCEEDINGS

Activities of ARCC and the Subregional Committees: [agenda item 3 (a) and (b)]

(a) Report of the President of the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee (ARCC) on the work of the Committee during the period 1987-1988

21. In introducing her report, document E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.IX/88/2, the President of ARCC recallled the several resolutions that had been made on women issues not only in Africa but all over the world and the impact these resolutions have had on African women. She referred to the attempt that had been made to take stock of the situation

as seen in the papers prepared for this meeting and the ECA Executive Secretary's speech to ARCC. She continued to report some of the achievements that had been made in various sectors such as health, water, sanitation, education, agriculture and the like. Despite some of these notable achievements she said, there were gaps which must be filled.

22. Discussing the activities of ARCC since the last meeting in April 1987, the President reported that ARCC participated in the UNDP/ARCC/ECA Evaluation Mission on the women's programme in the ECA/MULPOCs (August-1987) whose report was presented to this meeting. She also reported on the consultative mission undertaken by the African Training and Research Centre for Women, ECA to Accra, Ghana to consult on the Evaluation Mission as well as on the arrangement of a study tour by business women from Eastern and Southern Africa to Ghana which was conducted by ECA/ATRCW in December 1987. A Bureau meeting of the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development was also held in Addis Ababa in November 1987 with a view to consider the UNDP/ARCC/ECA Evaluation mission. The Bureau which was attended by two representatives out of the five Bureau members also looked at the Draft Project Proposed to UNDP related to Women's Programme in MULPOCs and the Draft-Agenda of the Ninth Meeting of the ARCC.

23. In concluding her presentation, she emphasized that there was need to realistically review progress made and make proposals for the future.

(b) Report of Subregional Committees on the Integration of Women in Development on their Work during the Period 1987-1988

(i) The Niamey MULPOC Subregional Committee

24. The Vice-Chairperson of the West African Subregional Committee of the Integration of Women in Development presented document E/ECA/MUL/NIA/88 on the work of the Committee.

25. She recalled that in establishing the MULPOC, ECA had been guided by the concern to gear its programmes and priorities to the needs of the member States. A detailed appraisal of the national development structures had revealed that attention had not always been paid to women as a population group. Nor had the contribution they could make to attainment of development programme objectives been considered.

26. For this reason, resolution 4 of the African Regional Meeting held in Nouakchott in September 1977 on the implementation of National Plan, the Regional Plan and the World Action Plan (Mexico) for the Advancement of Women had requested that women's activities should be incorporated into the work programme of the MULPOC.

27. The MULPOC for West Africa had accordingly inserted a women's component in its work programme.

28. She went on to describe briefly the achievements of the women's programme. These could not easily be quantified. She stressed the close link between the operational activities of the programme and the overall budget resources that UNDP had provided during the eight years over which the programme had been conducted.

29. In conclusion, she highlighted some of the difficulties encountered which include: (a) extent of the subregion with 16 countries with only one co-ordinator to carry out the activities of the subregion; (b) implementation met with delays of recruitment of consultants; communications were difficult and consultants were not available when needed; (c) political changes in the countries affected changes of focal points; and (d) difficult to foster collaboration between UNDP and the co-ordinator.

(ii) Report of the Gisenyi MULPOC Subregional Committee (ECA/MULPOC/Gisenyi/13)

30. The Chairperson of the Subregional Committee for the Integration of Women in Development within the Gisenyi MULPOC countries began by describing the activities carried out by that Committee during the period 1982-1987. During the biennial 1987-1988, the committee organized two subregional seminars respectively on management and cooperative training as well as two national seminars in Rwanda and Zaire respectively on the promotion of needed essential handicrafts and on project formulation. In addition, the second issue of the Newsletter on Women and Development was published.

31. She went on to outline the difficulties encountered by the Subregional Committee in carrying out its programme. Among them were inadequate financial resources for MULPOC (women's programmes and the centralized nature of the accounts managed from Addis Ababa). Delays in the recruitment of a Co-ordinator for the Gisenyi MULPOC women's programme had been the reason for her absence from the UNDP country programming, donor roundtable and NATCAP exercises as well as the UNIFEM Brainstorming Seminar organized at Niamey in July 1986.

32. She concluded by seeking information on the periodicity of MULPOC meetings and wondered what would be the future of MULPOC women's programme should no financing be secured. She suggested that the African Governments and ECA should organize consultative meetings to find out what ways and means there were for finding the necessary human and financial resources to continue the programme so that the work undertaken would not be left uncompleted.

33. Finally, she described the problems and difficulties encountered during the implementation of operational activities. Some of the problems had bureaucratic origins (delays in the recruitment of consultants). Others were political (policy changes in certain countries which led to a change of officials). Still others were human and financial constraints relative to the needs of women in the subregion. The work programme prepared by the Committee had always been more ambitious than the resources available (both human and financial) would allow.

(iii) Report of the Tangier MULPOC Subregional Committee (E/ECA/MU/Tang/EEM/2)

34. This report was presented by the Rapporteur of the Subregional Committee of the Tangiers MULPOC. In her presentation, and referring to the activities of 1988/89, she stated that nothing had been done so far in terms of studies or projects for women's development. Morocco as a member of MULPOC she said, presented several projects since 1985 relating to literacy, activities in agriculture, training and the like. However, nothing had been implemented partly because of the absence of a coordinator and partly because of the absence of material support.

35. At the meeting of the bureau of the Subregional Committee 12-13 March 1988 and attended by Morocco and Egypt in Tangier, the speaker reported that participants deplored the situation which threatened to cripple the work of the Subregion. Egypt, she reported, undertook to pay the salary of the Coordinator/Expert if ECA would provide support for accommodation of the Coordinator. This was however, not in line with ECA regulations. She further reported that a Committee had been set up to assess the Women's Programme in the MULPOC.

36. In conclusion, the Rapporteur of the Tangier MULPOC Subregional Committee from Morocco recommended and invited ECA to: (i) pursue contacts with UNDP in order that UNDP may review its position regarding suspension of financial assistance to the women's programmes of the Tangiers MULPOC project; (ii) to pursue its efforts to ensure the continuation of the programme; and (iii) provide support (accommodation) for the coordinator.

(iv) Report of the Yaounde MULPOC Subregional Committee

37. On behalf of the Chairperson of the Subregional Committee on the integration of women in development in the Yaounde based MULPOC, the delegate of Tchad presented the terminal report of the Project RAF/82/013. She recalled the objective of the programme which was designed to ensure women's affairs were taken into account in national plans. She pointed out the various activities undertaken from 1983-1987. These included seminars at national and subregional levels on various subjects such as co-operatives, the role of women in development process. Study tours and in-depth studies were also pointed. They included among others: study of women in agriculture in Central Africa, female drop-outs from school and policy to ensure women's integration into mainstream of development.

38. Undoubtedly, the activities helped to raise the awereness of the policy and decision-makers on the role of women in development. As a result, national machineries were established, forum at subregional level for exchange of information was instituted and a great deal of information and data had been collected to help take into account women concern in the planning process. However, in terms of measurable impact, the performance of the programme had been disappointing. Despite the efforts of the Coordinator of the programme and the various seminars held to sensitize both men and women concerned with the problem of policy making, it had not been possible to mobilize the required financial resources other than from UNDP.

39. Constraints faced during this reporting period were also pointed out. These were financial resources, human resources, administrative bottlenecks and lack of follow-up. Though these problems were raised in Tripartite Reviews 1980-1987, she reported, no concrete action had been taken.

40. In summary, she asserted that data collected gave a fair view of women in development process. However, this would have been more effective if there had been concrete follow up action.

(v) Report of the Lusaka MULPOC Subregional Committee (RAF/82/001)

41. In her presentation on the activities of the Lusaka MULPOC Subregional Committee on the Integration of Women, the representative of Zimbabwe as Chairperson of the Lusaka MULPOC Subregional Committee outlined the programmed activities of the Committee, the achievements, problems implementation, the effectiveness of the Committee's activities and the successes attained. Finally, she outlined the significant conclusions reached and lessons to be learned from the planning and implementation of those activities.

42. Planned activities for the Committee had included subregional workshops and study tours, national seminars, award of grants and fellowships, research studies, advisory services and the publication of information bulletins. The implementation of those activities was impeded by a number of problems, among which were obvious staff shortages and it was not possible for only one secretariat staff to cover all the 10 countries of the MULPOC. Also, there were administrative problems particularly those arising from centralized procedures such as those relating to procurement and the recruitment of consultants. Limited communications compounded by the large number of countries resulted in long delays in the implementation of activities and at times some activities had to be cancelled.

43. Some headway had however been made particularly in the extension of knowledge, skills and experience to a large number of women; information had been collected on the contribution of women to development, national machineries for the integration of women in development had been established, and the location of the project in the ECA MULPOC had made it possible for the project to call on and benefit from ECA's substantive divisions as well as from consideration by ECA's legislative organs.

44. The significant conclusions reached and lessons learned from the implementation of the programme's activities were as follows: (a) more needed to be done in the sensitization of gender related issues; (b) the programmes that are entirely dependent on donor funds are difficult to sustain if they are not matched with those of their operators; (c) resources needed to be planned in advance and allocated properly; (d) national machineries needed to be strengthened particularly in the area of monitoring and evaluation. She then explained that plans to publish a newsletter had not succeeded because of difficulties in collection of information and articles from member States.

46. Finally, she stated that the vacuum left by the termination of the UNDP programme assistance needed to be filled so that a vacuum is not created in order to promote the integration of women in development and to facilitate follow-up on the concerns for women at the national level.

Report of the African Training and Research Centre for Women
Programme of Work and activities of ATRCW 1987-1989 (agenda item 4)

46. This was presented by the ECA Secretariat. In introducing the report document E/ECA/ATRCW/AFCC.IX/88/3 reference was made to resolution 507(XXII) adopted at the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of Ministers of ECA giving mandate to ECA for women's programme.

47. Women in development was now a concern of not only ATRCW, but of the whole ECA and its divisions. Focal points had been established in eight divisions of the ECA and as a result, the International Trade and Finance Division of ECA organized the first

Regional Workshop on the Integration of Women in Trade and Commerce which was held in Niamey, Republic of Niger from 31 March to 2 April 1988. ATRCW had also established collaboration with United Nations Research and Training Institute for the Advancement of Women (INSTRAW) and United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM).

48. Activities undertaken during this period include among others: (i) training seminar in the planning, formulation, execution and evaluation of development projects in Kinshasa, Zaire; (ii) subregional management seminar in Gisenyi, Rwanda; (iii) study tour to Ghana for business women and women project managers from Eastern and Southern Africa; and (iv) a seminar on women, water supply and sanitation held in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia in collaboration with INSTRAW.

49. In conclusion, the secretariat brought to the attention of the participants the ATRCW's list of publications, attached as annex III of the report indicating that documents will be sent as requested.

Discussion

50. In the discussion that followed, participants expressed a greater concern for the women co-ordinators, programmes and activities of the MULPOCs which were terminated as of December, 1987. In this respect, participants felt that the future role of the women in development programmes (WID) at the MULPOCs needed to be clarified and enquired whether new structures were being considered in order to ensure that gains made were not lost. In recognition of the important contribution and role that the women's coordinators played during their term of office, ARCC expressed its appreciation and gratitude to the women coordinators.

51. In view of this concern, several questions were raised to which UNDP and ECA responded. The UNDP representative expressed the view that both within UNDP and in its programme of support to member States, much higher priority was given to issues related to women in development. For the first time, a division had been established to deal with women issues and to ensure that women's concerns are reflected in UNDP supported projects. In UNDP's Guiding Principles for the preparation of Africa's Fourth Cycle country programmes as well as the preparation of Africa's Fourth Regional Programme, the enhancement of the role of women in development not only as beneficiaries but as active participants is considered as one of the pillars of UNDP's programme of technical co-operation. A second pillar is food production and agriculture, which, in the African context, implies the involvement of the majority of women.

52. UNDP further stated that in discussing issues related to women in development, the focus of attention should not merely be limited to projects suggested from UDNP's Africa's regional programme, which, for the fourth cycle meaning from 1987-1991, amounts to only US$200 million. The bulk of UNDP resources is allocated to individual countries through the country programmes. Once an Indicative Planning Figures (IPF) is earmarked to a country, the allocation of the IPF resources is based on the priorities expressed by member governments as reflected in their development plan. Thus if UNDP provided resources are to produce maximum impact on the enhancement of the role of women in development and on improving their wellbeing, then it is in the allocation of national IPFs that needs special focus.

53. He further pointed out that although the fate of the coordinators in the MULPOCs' women's programmes seemed to generate heated debate, it should be borne in mind that the total allocation of UNDP resources devoted to the enhancement of the role of women and their participation in development was much higher in the fourth UNDP cycle (1987-1991) than was in the third UNDP cycle (1982-1986).

54. The UNDP representative further pointed out that UNDP had funded in January 1988 at ECA's request an evaluation of the work of two MULPOCs and had earmarked an initial amount of US$300,000 within which ECA was requested to produce a preparatory project proposal. ECA's project proposal was submitted to UNDP on 1 April 1988 for appraisal.

55. Responding to the questions directed at ECA, the representative of the Executive Secretary of the ECA pointed out that while ECA is often regarded as the secretariat, ECA goes beyond the secretariat. Within the ECA work programme, activities related to women in development are within the Programme of Social Development and Humanitarian Affairs: Sub-programme 3 on Integration of Women in Development. Accordingly, the women's programme must continue within ECA.

56. In view of its commitment to the women's programme, ECA had strengthened the ATRCW by the creation of four regular posts. Attempts made at securing additional resources through the regular budget last year for the programmes implementation were unsuccessful because of the current financial crisis facing the UN. Continuing, he stated that collaboration between the UN agencies including ECA was required and that women's programme was a crucial component of the ECA's overall work programme. In this connection, he emphasized that member States needed to build on what had been gained through their national machineries.

57. In view of the great concern expressed by participants on the issue of the women in development programmes within the MULPOCs, the President of ARCC proposed the setting up of two ad-hoc committee for the meeting: Morocco, Comoros and Burundi were requested to serve on the Question and Answers Committee, while Mauritania, Zimbabwe and Niger served on the Resolution Committee.

Programme for the integration of women in development through the MULPOCs report of the UNDP/ARCC/ECA. Evaluation Mission (August 1987). (agenda item 5)

58. The report was presented by a member of the evaluation mission who pointed out that the mission had been prompted by the reactions to the announcements by UNDP in early April 1987 that it would not continue support to the MULPOC Women's Projects in the UNDP Fourth Programming Cycle.

59. The mission which was composed of consultants of UNDP and ECA and a representative of the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) had the following objectives: (i) to re-evaluate the WID components of the MULPOCs in order to determine their achievements, impact and constraints (organizational, financial, human resources, etc.), capabilities to respond to the future orientation of the WID activities and possible UNDP assistance during the Fourth Programming Cycle; (ii) to examine and assess the appropriateness of alternative or complementary structures at the regional and sub-regional levels to develop further and implement the new WID agenda.

60. Discussing the findings of the mission, the presenter stated that there were no realistic alternative structures to the MULPOCs for sub-regional women's programmes. Both ECOWAS and PTA proved not to be appropriate alternative structures for the MULPOC projects while SADCC was likely to develop a system of scattered focal points. However, national UNDP offices and UNIFEM were seen as complementary structures which could do much to strengthen National Machineries and enhance the effectiveness of the MULPOC projects.

61. The mission recommended among other things that ECA should bear the core cost of WID Experts giving them regular posts corresponding to those of their MULPOC colleagues. UNDP should bear the variable costs (consultants, travel, missions training workshops, etc.) of the programmes.

62. In the subsequent discussions delegates expressed similar concerns to those discussed earlier on regarding the discontinuation of the MULPOCs programme on women in development.

Implementation of Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women and the United Nations Programme of Action for African Economic Recovery and Development 1986-1990 [agenda item 6 (a) and (b)]

Report to the African Regional Co-ordinating Committee for the integration of women in development on the changing socio-economic condition of women in Africa in the context of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women (E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.IX/88/5 [agenda item 6 (a)]

63. Presenting the report, the ECA secretariat informed the meeting that in addition to the presentation of the report to ARCC for discussion, the report was prepared for presentation to the ECA Conference of Ministers. The report revealed action taken towards the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies since the World Conference held in Nairobi, Kenya; in July 1985.

64. Activities undertaken within the United Nations system and its specialized agencies to translate the Forward-looking Strategies into concrete actions were pointed out. These included strengthening of their existing focal points and/or establishing focal points where they did not exist.

65. Within the ECA secretariat, it was revealed that ATRCW as the focal point for the African region had drawn up guidelines for incorporating women's concern in all ECA divisions. This, it was reported, had helped the Centre to monitor progress made within ECA. As an example, the International Trade and Finance Division organized a Regional Workshop on the Integration of Women in Trade and Commerce - held in Niamey, Republic of Niger from 31 March to 2 April 1988 - and whose report was being presented to ARCC meeting.

66. The role of NGOs in publicising the Forward-looking Strategies, in bringing women issues to the fore front and in conducting research as well as producing training manuals and handbooks was also reported on.

67. At the national level, initiatives for sensitizing on women in development (WID) issues were pointed out, while technical cooperation among African countries at the subregional level was being advanced. Achievements in various sectors at the national level were outlined. These included employment, education and training, agriculture, industry, health, water and sanitation as well as the role of women at the decision-making level.

68. Historical obstacles and serious current challenges such as the economic recession in the region and other constraints hampering the implementation process of the Arusha and Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies were also brought to the attention of the meeting.

69. Concluding the presentation, it was noted that though comendable, most of the efforts made towards changing the socio-economic conditions of women in Africa in the context of the Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies fall short of the required resources, structural and policy changes that could ensure a more effective way towards the changing socio-economic conditions of women in Africa.

Discussion

70. In the discussion that followed, comments and questions were raised focusing on statistical data and methodology used in preparing the report. Among other interventions, UNIFEM representative was sorry that, in spite of the good collaboration existing between her organization and the ECA through ATRCW and women programmes in the MULPOCs, no mention was made of UNIFEM's activities in the review of UN agencies involved in WID in Africa. Responding to the questions and comments made by the participants, the secretariat informed the meeting as follows:

71. That the paper was a desk study based on information, studies, reviews and reports available within the secretariat and at the MULPOCs. A questionnaire to survey the various activities and initiatives undertaken at the national level was sent to member States. However, responses from most member States were yet to be received (apart from the few countries who had responded to the questionnaire). Since ECA/ATRCW will be reporting on this subject every year, the secretariat appealed to participants to ensure that their respective countries responded to the questionnaire to feed the secretariat with all the necessary information on women issues available in the respective countries. It was agreed that a new paragraph 14 reflecting UNIFEM's activities would be added to document E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.IX/88.5 dealing with "the changes in the socio-economic conditions of women in Africa in the context of the Nairobi Forward-looking Stragegies for the Advancement of Women in Development".

Report to the Africa Regional Co-ordinating Committee on the Integration of Women in Development (ARCC) on the Role of Women in their contribution to Domestic and Intra-African Trade E/ECA/TRADE/88/4 [agenda item 6 (b)]

72. The report of the workshop was presented to the meeting by the representative of Niger who had served as the chairperson during the workshop which was held 31 March - 2 April 1988. Participating countries included Algeria, Burkina Faso, Comoros, Côte d'Ivoire, the Gambia, Guinea, Guinea-Bissau, Mauritania, the Niger, Rwanda, Tanzania and Tchad. United Nations Fund for Women (UNIFEM), Pan-African Women's Organization (PAWO), Lutheran World Federation and the Inter-African Committee (IAC) had attended as observers.

73. In the discussion that followed, participants expressed their appreciation to the Chairperson for the excellent report she had just presented. There was a general consensus that the workshop was innovative and dealt with all issues pertinent to the integration of women in trade and commerce. Some delegations expressed concern at the low attendance at this workshop which was so important to the enhancement of women traders.

74. In adopting the report, minor amendments were made to the resolution attached thereto so as to refer to the Arusha and Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Development. The report was adopted.

Measures for collaboration between ECA's Programme for the Integration of Women in Development (PIWD) and Non-governmental Organizations (NGOs) (agenda item 7)

75. In introducing document E/ECA/ATRCW/ARCC.IX/88/8, a representative of the secretariat stated that the main purpose of the report was to seek the guidance of the Committee concerning collaboration with NGOs since ECA's mandate was to work with governments. She informed the Committee that the report had identified different types of NGOs, and in that context requested the Committee's guidance on the modalities of such collaboration.

76. In the ensuing discussion the Committee observed that although the first part of the report was theoretical in nature, the report nevertheless provided a solid basis for discussion. It was timely and pertinent to the issues under discussion. Most participants dwelt on the operational flexibility of NGOs, and their speed as well as efficiency of operation. The Committee noted, also, that some NGOs operated in the same areas as ECA, and pointed to the need for collaboration. It was pointed out also, that some NGOs dealt mainly with crisis situations and consequently their existence was ephemeral in character. There were lots of women's groups and they were all doing good work. The meeting recommended that ECA should carry out a study regarding NGOs in collaboration with member States. On the other hand, it was also recommended that the matter of collaboration with NGOs be left to the discretion of member States.

77. Most delegates acknowledged the need for collaboration with NGOs, but at the subregional level. One representative explained that her country did not have any government department with responsibility for women's affairs, but a federation of women's associations existed and she expressed her association's desire to co-operate with ECA.

78. The observer from UNIFEM informed the Committee of the recent International Conference on the Human Dimension of Africa's Economic Recovery and Development which in its Khartoum declaration had urged collaboration with NGOs particularly now when African governments are faced with serious economic and financial constraints. She went on to report that the Conference had noted that there were many different kinds of NGOs, and that emphasis should be placed on strengthening local, indigenous NGOs. She informed the meeting of the African Women's Task Force established at the Regional Preparatory Committee to the Arusha Conference in 1984 to coordinate and assist in the formation of regional network of NGOs for women. She reported that the Task Force was due to meet in Nairobi, Kenya this month to draw-up the propcsal for the establishment of an African Women's Communication and Development Network. She suggested that the Network may be the most appropriate NGO structure for the ECA to associate and collaborate with.

79. The observer from the Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices (IAC) informed the Committee that her organization, which dealt with traditional practices affecting the health of women and children was established in 1984 and had entered into a co-operation agreement with ECA in 1986. She expressed her organization's interest to also co-operate with ARCC and with other NGOs. She then informed the meeting of a Plan of Action to eradicate those traditional practices which were harmful to women and children, expressing her desire to submit it to governments including those which had not participated in the Addis Ababa Seminar which had adopted that Plan of Action.

80. The observer from the Pan-African Women's Organization informed the Committee of the history of her organization and stated that its objectives had been modified to include economic concerns in addition to its original political ones, and called for closer co-operation with ECA and her organization.

81. The observer from OAU noted that although the annotated agenda made reference to the establishment of a communication network which would depend on the support given by governments, OAU and the United Nations systems, the working document did not make any reference to that. She then urged that information on that issue be dully communicated to the OAU to enable it consider an eventual support.

82. The Committee then decided, on the basis of the information and its deliberations, that links should be established with subregional and regional NGOs. National NGOs should be left to national machineries with the exception of Associations of National NGOs. The Committee further requested that ECA should first prepare an inventory and analysis of African NGOs and to that effect should mount missions to member States to collect the necessary information. The Committee also requested ECA to make that information available to OAU which could also contribute to the collaborative efforts.

Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development (11-23 September 1989) proposed agenda [agenda item 8]

83. In introducing agenda item 8, the ECA secretariat gave a historical background concerning the Regional Conferences on the Integration of Women in Development which had been held since 1979. At the 1984 Arusha Conference ECA and OAU were requested to convene a conference to appraise and review the implementation of the Forward-looking Strategies before the end of 1989. A provisional agenda for this Regional Conference was hence being tabled to the ARCC meeting for consideration. The provisional agenda proposed was tentative requiring the ARCC meeting to improve on it, make changes and adopt.

84. Regarding the venue, the representative from Comoros expressed the offer on behalf of her government to host the conference. Appreciating the comments made by the delegates, the ECA secretariat stated that the offer of Comoros to host the Regional Conference will be presented to TEPCOW and to the Conference of Ministers.

85. The proposed provisional agenda for the Fourth Regional Conference on the Integration of Women in Development (11-23 September 1989) was then tentatively adopted as follows:

1. Opening of the meeting.

2. Election of officers.

3. Adoption of the agenda and organization of work.

4. Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa beyond the end of the United Nations Decade for Women: country reports.

5. Implementation of the Arusha Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Africa beyond the end of the United Nations Decade for Women: regional perspectives.

6. Strategies for improving women's access to education and training in science and technologies.

7. Progress report, implementation of the project: "Improving African women's role in informal sector production and management".

8. Adoption of the report.

Any other business (agenda item 9)

36. Under this agenda item, Morocco took the floor and presented the Morocco National Strategy for the Integration of Women in Development. In her presentation, she elaborated in detail the strategy formulated in the various sectors of education, employment, legal, political, health and the like aimed at enhancing and increasing women's participation in all sectors of national development. With regard to the Provisional Agenda for the Fourth Regional Conference, it was suggested that a topic on women's health be added.

Statement by observers

37. The following statements were made by some of the organizations who attended the meeting as observers:

38. The Inter-African Committee on Traditional Practices expressed its sincere appreciation for being invited to the Ninth meeting of ARCC on the Integration of Women in Development (WID) and extended its cordial thanks to the Government of Niger for its hospitality.

39. Noting the interest shown by the UNECA to consider strengthening its links with NGOs, the IAC referred to the agreement for co-operation it had entered with the UNECA and pointed out the importance of collaborative efforts between NGOs and national machineries.

40. The IAC brought to the attention of the participants the proceedings of the Regional Seminar held in Addis Ababa 6-10 April 1987 on traditional practices affecting the health of women and children in Africa co-sponsored by the Government of Ethiopia, UNECA, OAU, WHO, UNICEF and IAC and the adoption of the Plan of Action for the Irradication of Harmful Traditional Practices. It also reported that letters of appeal were sent to the Heads of State and Ministers of Health of the 29 African participating countries.

91. The IAC observer once again referred to the Eighth meeting of ARCC on the Integration of Women in Development held in Addis Ababa 10-11 April 1987 where the Plan of Action was submitted for consideration by this meeting and that of the Conference of Ministers. The IAC made a similar request and submitted the 1987 Plan of Action. It also appealed to the Government of Niger for its support and submitted the Plan of Action to Her Excellency the Secretary of State for Public Health in charge of Social and Women Affairs.

92. In her statement, the OAU representative summarized the various actions undertaken by OAU towards the integration of women in the development process, including its active participation in the world women conferences and several seminars.

93. She stated that the OAU Council of Ministers had adopted several resolutions aimed at improving women's status and their role in Africa socio-economic development. She recalled that the Arusha intergovernmental preparatory meeting for the Nairobi World Conference which adopted the Forward-Looking Strategies (FLS) was a joint OAU/ECA meeting.

94. Regarding the Fourth Regional Conference, she mentioned the fact that OAU and ECA had been requested by the Arusha Conference to jointly organize this conference before the year 1990 and another one before the year 2000 so as to review and appraise the progress achieved in the implementation of the FLS. A provisional agenda reflecting the respective mandates of both ECA and OAU has to be drawn up. The OAU representative accordingly suggested some additional items such as,

(i) the situation of women and children under apartheid

(ii) progress achieved in food self-sufficiency through women's contribution to agriculture;

(iii) the impact of debt crisis on women and how women could contribute to solving this problem.

95. She further informed the participants of the establishment at the OAU Headquaters of a women's unit which will be operational by next June as it already has a three year work programme based on the priorities defined in the FLS. In support of this programme, ILO is expected to provide technical assistance while UNDP and UNIFEM will respectively fund some of its projects and provide technical support.

96. The OAU is already associated with the UNDP funded project on the informal sector whose basic document was jointly drafted by ECA and OAU.

97. She further informed the meeting of the outcome of the UNIFEM international symposium on Child Survival and Development held in Harare (Zimbabwe) 1-5 March, 1988, and called attention to the fact that to achieve their objective women have to use existing fora such as the Conference of Ministers of Social Affairs, Ministers of Culture, Ministers of Health, Ministers of Information and Ministers of Education.

98. The Secretary-General of the Pan-African Family Organization Mme Aissata Kane gave a brief history of the Organization. The Organization was created in November 1977 and was inspired by the charter and objectives of the OAU. Its main objectives are:

(a) to contribute to the strengthening and solidarity of all families in Africa and the world by establishing linkages with organizations in Africa and elsewhere who work for the welfare of the family;

(b) to safeguard and promote the African family so that its mission as a cultural, educational, social and economic vehicle becomes instrumental in the development of the Africa region; and

(c) to reaffirm the authentic personality of the African family based on its spiritual and moral values.

99. The Headquarters of their inter-African Organization is in Morocco and its President is H.E. Mr. Mohammed Abied, Minister of Handicrafts and Social Affairs and Mayor of Casablanca. All the members of the Organizations wished to have close collaboration with ARCC, national machineries and especially with ATRCW.

Adoption of the report (agenda item 10)

100. The report of the meeting was adopted as amended.

Closing session

101. The ninth meeting of ARCC ended on 5 April 1988 with the adoption of the report of the meeting. During the closing session and on behalf of the Executive Secretary and the Secretariat, the ECA Representative thanked the President of ARCC for her high quality of leadership. He thanked all members of the committee and participants for their contribution to the meeting and for the interest they had shown to the ECA programme for women. He assured participants of ECA's commitment to the women's programme and that ECA would do all in its power to ensure that the programme is not only maintained but strengthened even further.

102. The Chairperson of the meeting as well as President of ARCC expressed her personnal satisfaction and that of the Bureau for the very high quality discussions, comments and presentations made which contributed to the success of the meeting.

103. In her statement, the Secretary of State for Public Health in charge of Social and Women Affairs of the Republic of Niger said that the resolutions adopted by the committee should guide member States, integovernmental and non-governmental organizations in their actions to be undertaken during the coming biennial year. She expressed concern and appealed to member States to give favourable consideration to the co-ordinators and women programmes of the MULPOCs.

104. She then declared the meeting closed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

A. At the national level

1. Governments and agencies of the United Nations System should see to it that Africa's priorities expressed in the Arusha and Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies were respected and implemented in order to harmonize and make the various development projects and programmes more efficient and effective;

2. In all structural policy reform measures such as the UN-PAAERD and the Kilimanjaro Programme of Action for African Population and Self-reliant Development, governments should give special attention to issues that relate to the improvement of women's socio-economic and political status; in view of the important role women play in the development process, member States should consider the involvement of women in the design, implementation and evaluation of UN-PAAERD programmes;

3. Governments should strengthen existing national machineries for the integration of women in development through the establishment of data banks and documentation units to enable the national women's machinery collect, collate and disseminate necessary information on women's roles, activities and needs to policy makers, planners and implementers;

4. The Arusha and Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for Advancement of Women in Development should be used by planning minitries and other organizations for designing, implementing and monitoring of programmes as a measure to ensure full integration of women in development;

5. In the field of science and technology where women enrolment in secondary and tertiary institutions is very low, strategies be developed aimed at encouraging women and girls increase their entry into scientific and technical fields. In the urban areas where high technologies are being introduced, awareness should be created and appropriate training planned for women;

6. For a larger number of rural people, particularly women and for the improvement of their roles there is need for member States and institutions to research into improved technologies that go beyond the energy saving stoves which can truly lighten the burdens of women in production, processing, storage and distribution of their produce and household tasks;

7. African governments should have special programmes for women in leadership training to ensure their participation in the decision-making process at a higher level in society;

8. Studies to assess the types and level of involvement of women's economic activity, the importance and utilization of women's income, and the contribution of women to national development should be undertaken at national level to enable governments formulate adequate policy measures to facilitate integration of women within the overall development process;

9. In the field of domestic trade and the informal sector where Africa women play a significant role, in the devleopment process, governments with the support of development financial institutions should take appropriate and immediate measures to itnegrate women in this field, through inter alia provision of education to upgrade the technical and managerial skills of business women and traders; up-to-date and reliable information on trade opportunities, improvement of traditional markets both rural and urban by providing shelter, storage, health sanitation, and day-care and nursery facilities; removal of discriminatory practices against women in granting loans and credits; the establishment of more effective women traders associations and entry of women in national chambers of commerce; and the channeling of more resources and financial support to African business women and traders.

B. At the subregional/regional levels

10. Member States with the support of international and intergovernmental organizations should explore ways and means to ensure continuity of the women's structures that have been established at the subregional and regional levels in accordance with the recommendations of the ECA/UNDP/ARCC mission of August 1987 which among other things reiteracted that they found no other realistic alternative structures to the MULPOC's subregional programmes;

11. Member States should ensure nomination and inclusion fo ARCC/Sub-regional bureau members on their delegations to the MULPOC meetings as has happened, for the first time in the history of ARCC, this year.

12. Existing subregional and regional institutions offering training in priority areas of specialization such as administration and management should incorporate into their training programmes specific components that will cater for the needs of women.

13. Support to African NGOs that promote women's improved participation in Africa's economic recovery and development, particularly today in the face of grave financial constraints being faced by African governments should be considered.

C. At the international level

14. International organizations are called upon to:

(a) Provide financial assistance for women in management, science and technological trainining;

(b) Provide both financial and technical support for projects designed to enhance productivity of rural women;

(c) Provide financial support especially in cases where structural adjustment programmes have curtailed or reduced governmental support in the whole development programmes.

RESOLUTION NO. 1

WOMEN IN DEVELOPMENT

The Conference of Ministers,

Considering the growing activities of ECA in implementing the Mexico Plan of Action, the Arusha and Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Integration of Women in Development,

Considering the effectiveness of financial support of UNDP in implementing programmes for the integration of women in the development process in the African continent,

Referring to the UNDP/ECA/ARCC evaluation mission of August 1987 related to the programme of integration of women in development at the MULPOC level,

Recalling General Assembly resolution 40/258 of 18 December 1987 which requested the Secretary-General to continue his efforts with a view to increasing the number of women in posts subject to geographical distribution for achieving, to the extent possible, an overall participation rate of 30 per cent of the total by 1990,

Recognizing that the programmes and structures at subregional and regional levels have served for co-ordinating activities for the advancement of women and for establishing links between national programmes for the integration of women in development, and for promoting technical co-operation between countries of the same region and between subregions,

1. Sends an urgent appeal to relevant bodies, especially UNDP and ECA to ensure that the programme for the integration of women in development within the MULPOCs is maintained;

2. Urges countries to meet their budgetary contributions to international institutions responsible for financing programmes for the integration of women in development in MULPOCs;

3. Requests the Executive Secretary of ECA to take all necessary steps for the reinstatement of the posts for the co-ordinators within the MULPOCs;

4. Appeals to bilateral and multilateral funding agencies to co-ordinate their efforts and their interventions in the subregions in order to make the development programmes of the member States more efficient and effective;

5. Recommends to the United Nations that action be taken to ensure that professional women at ECA and especially at ATRCW be given permanent posts and that a genuine policy be established to increase their numbers and their promotion to higher professional levels;

6. Requests interested member governments to encourage and promote direct working relations between NGOs and national machineries for the integration of women in development;

7. Advocates within a multilateral framework, the implementation, jointly with NGOs, of subregional projects in which several countries would be associated.

RESOLUTION NO. 2

INTEGRATION OF AFRICAN WOMEN IN TRADE AND COMMERCE

The Conference of Ministers,

Having considered the report of the African Regional Co-ordination Committee on the Integration of Women in Development on its meeting, including its consideration of the report of the Regional Workshop on the integration of women in trade and commerce held in Niamey from 31 March to 2 April 1988,

Recalling the Lagos Plan of Action, and the Arusha and Nairobi Forward-looking Strategies for the Advancement of Women in Development which inter-alia called for measures to be adopted to enhance the integration of African women in trade, commerce and other critical economic sectors,

Recognizing that African women constitute the back-bone of economic and social activities especially in the rural areas where the bulk of the populations live and that special measures need to be taken urgently to improve the situation of African business women and traders,

Gravely concerned by the poor conditions under which African women operate especially in the traditional markets and the lack of basic infrastructure and other supporting facilities,

1. Endorses the recommendations of the Regional Workshop on the integration of women in trade and commerce;

2. Congratulates the Executive Secretary and his staff for organizing such an innovative workshop in favour of African women traders;

3. Calls upon African Governments and public and local authorities to accord special recognition to the important role women play in trade and commerce and their significant contribution to the economic development process of the African nations and to adopt relevant policies and legislations in support of the role and contribution of women in trade including the granting of import licences and the award of tenders;

4. Strongly appeals to the relevant authorities as a matter of urgency to significantly improve the conditions in the African traditional markets, both in rural and urban areas through the provision of the necessary facilities including adequate transport, storage, health and sanitation, appropriate security welfare and day-care and nursery centres for infants and children of women traders;

5. Further appeals to African Governments to pursuade commercial banks and financial institutions to provide more liberal credit facilities to African business women and traders, to prevent further discrimination against women in granting loans and credits and to establish appropriate schemes to guarantee loans contracted by African women for the purposes of improving their trade and commercial activities;

6. Requests the development financial institutions, such as the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), the African Development Bank Group, the World Bank Group, the Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and the Islamic Development Bank to intensify their efforts to encourage the entry and greater participation of African women in trade and commerce and to channel more financial and technical support in this field;

7. Further requests the Executive Secretary of the Economic Commission for Africa, the Secretary-General of the Organization of African Unity, the Secretary-General of the United Nations Conference on Trade and Development, the Executive Director of the Internaitonal Trade Centre and the Executive Director of the United Nations Institute for Training and Research for women to draw up a joint programme for the training of African business women and traders at all levels, in both rural and urban areas, so as to enhance women's technical and managerial capabilities thereby increasing their role and contribution to Africa's social and economic development.